ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

GOING HOME

1

$2.25 USA • $3.20 CANADA • £1.45 UK

232
JUL

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MEMOIR

Having broken up with Zolastraya and embarked upon a two-year-and-two-month period of celibacy (unconsciously at first and then perversely after the first six months or so), I was a mess. A very surly drunk, which is the worst kind, but a very effective way to keep people at bay, which seemed to be what I needed and probably was.

Peter's Place, like most bars, had a pretty rapid turnover of bartenders and waitresses. Since I was there a lot, I tended to overtip just to ensure that the single waitresses and bartendresses (that really should be a word) didn't take an interest in me outside of serving me drinks and food. I know a lot of guys think that overtipping is seductive, but take my word for it, fellas, exactly the opposite is true. Anything that merges money and romance spells prostitution to a woman, so if you don't want romance, money makes a great shield.

This worked well almost all of the time, with one notable exception, and that was Judy. To say that Peter's Place was a favourite watering hole for a very un-literary crowd is to understate the case dramatically. It was one of the reasons I loved the place as much as I did. Well, Judy was an exception. B.A. in literature or something like that and kind of, well, full of it as only a B.A. in literature who is bartending for a living can be. I don't know where she found out that I was a writer, but somehow she found out I was a writer and we would have these quasi-literary discussions. To me, they were quasi-literary discussions. I gathered that she thought they were of a deeper and more intense quality. Even if I hadn't been in the middle of self-imposed celibacy, Judy would not have attracted me. A little too loud, a little too heavyset. If you were looking for a mother-figure to bed down with, Judy would be a good bet. But that definitely has never held any appeal for me.

Anyway, one of my friends and I were talking at the bar, and Judy had sort of joined in. Which was all right, don't get me wrong. She was an interesting conversationalist in that I-am-woman-hear-me-roar ping-pong rally kind of way, and she had enough of a sense of humour to take the edge off most of the time when I spiked one back at her that drilled a hole in her metaphorical paddle.

Somewhere along the way in the conversation, I asked her what her last name was. A lot of times you can tell something about a person by his or her last name. A lot of times you can't, but at this time I was of the viewpoint that it was worth asking.

"Crane," she said.

"Crane," I repeated, mulling it over.

"Yeah," she said. "Just like the toilet."

"Gee," I said, "I was thinking of 'Ichabod.'"

Ding. Round One to me.

Don't worry, folks. "Memoir" is just one of the entertainments I have planned for this space over the course of the next almost-three-years-or-so. If you don't like "Memoir," just be patient and maybe you'll find one you do like, okay?

CEREBUS
NO. 232 JULY 1998

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GOING HOME

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(Cerebus 232 to Cerebus 265)

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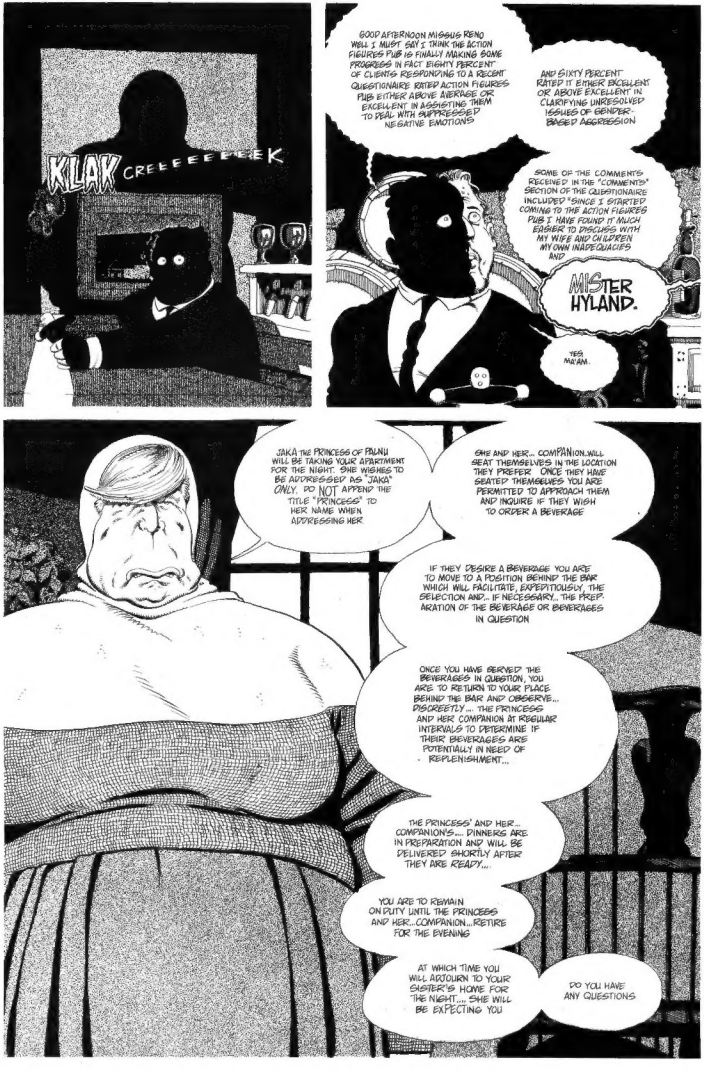
GOING
HOME

book one

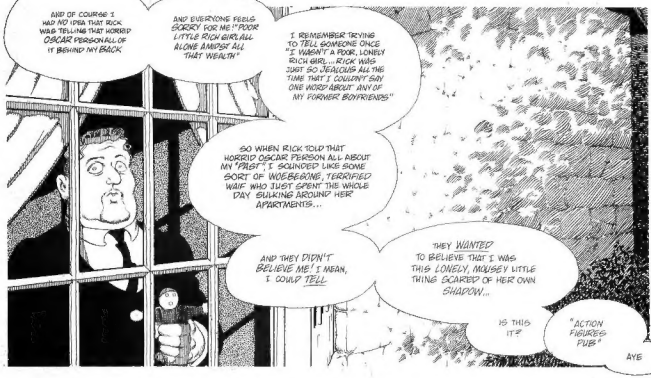
SUDDEN MOVES

OH.
SO WHAT DOES MY GUY SAY?
SIGH.
NO, SEE THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS
I SAY WHAT MY GUY SAYS
AND YOU SAY WHAT YOUR GUY SAYS
ACTION FIGURES PUB
GREG HYLAND presents
OH!
WHAT DID YOUR GUY SAY AGAIN...?
MY GUY SAID: "YOUR GUY LOOKS VERY SAD."
SEE - THAT'S THE PART I DON'T GET - HOW CAN MY GUY LOOK SAD? MY GUY IS A DOLL - SAME AS YOUR ACTION FIGURE!!
SIGH. ACTION FIGURE... MY GUY ALREADY TOLD YOUR GUY THAT: "WE'RE CALLED ACTION FIGURES."
YOU JUST PRETEND! OKAY? PRETEND YOU ARE YOUR GUY...
PRETEND I AM MY GUY
RIGHT. NOW:
HOW DOES YOUR GUY FEEL?
UMMMM MY GUY FEELS... SHORT.
NONONO -
SHORT. AND... AND WEAK. LIKE MY GUY KNOWS IF I LET GO OF HIM EVEN FOR A SECOND HE'S JUST GOING TO LIKE FALL OVER...

NO... SEE
WHAT MY GUY IS TRYING TO MAKE YOUR GUY UNDERSTAND
IS THAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO PRETEND THAT YOUR GUY IS YOU...
NOT
PRETEND THAT YOU ARE YOUR GUY...
OH OH OH...
SEE
MY GUY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT
THE WAY YOUR GUY EXPLAINED IT...
THUNK
FINE!
MY GUY APOLOGIZES PROFUSELY
TO YOUR GUY FOR MY GUY'S INADEQUATE VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS.
MY GUY THINKS YOUR GUY SOUNDS ANGRY AND DEFENSIVE
MY GUY IS NOT
AHEM.
MY GUY IS NOT ANGRY OR DEFENSIVE
MY GUY IS SORRY, WHICH IS WHY MY GUY APOLOGIZED TO YOUR GUY


KLAK CREEEEEEEEEK
GOOD AFTERNOON MISSUS RENO WELL I MUST SAY I THINK THE ACTION FIGURES PUB IS FINALLY MAKING SOME PROGRESS IN FACT EIGHTY PERCENT OF CLIENTS RESPONDING TO A RECENT QUESTIONNAIRE RATED ACTION FIGURES PUB EITHER ABOVE AVERAGE OR EXCELLENT IN ASSISTING THEM TO DEAL WITH SUPPRESSED NEGATIVE EMOTIONS
AND SIXTY PERCENT RATED IT EITHER EXCELLENT OR ABOVE EXCELLENT IN CLARIFYING UNRESOLVED ISSUES OF GENDER-BASED AGGRESSION
SOME OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED IN THE "COMMENTS" SECTION OF THE QUESTIONAIRE INCLUDED "SINCE I STARTED COMING TO THE ACTION FIGURES PUB I HAVE FOUND IT MUCH EASIER TO DISCUSS WITH MY WIFE AND CHILDREN MY OWN INADEQUACIES AND
MISTER HYLAND.
YES MA'AM.
JAKA THE PRINCESS OF PALNU WILL BE TAKING YOUR APARTMENT FOR THE NIGHT. SHE WISHES TO BE ADDRESSED AS "JAKA" ONLY. DO NOT APPEND THE TITLE "PRINCESS" TO HER NAME WHEN ADDRESSING HER
SHE AND HER... COMPANION WILL SEAT THEMSELVES IN THE LOCATION THEY PREFER. ONCE THEY HAVE SEATED THEMSELVES YOU ARE PERMITTED TO APPROACH THEM AND INQUIRE IF THEY WISH TO ORDER A BEVERAGE
IF THEY DESIRE A BEVERAGE YOU ARE TO MOVE TO A POSITION BEHIND THE BAR WHICH WILL FACILITATE, EXPEDITIOUSLY, THE SELECTION AND... IF NECESSARY... THE PREPARATION OF THE BEVERAGE OR BEVERAGES IN QUESTION
ONCE YOU HAVE SERVED THE BEVERAGES IN QUESTION, YOU ARE TO RETURN TO YOUR PLACE BEHIND THE BAR AND OBSERVE... DISCREETLY... THE PRINCESS AND HER COMPANION AT REGULAR INTERVALS TO DETERMINE IF THEIR BEVERAGES ARE POTENTIALLY IN NEED OF - REPLENISHMENT...
THE PRINCESS' AND HER COMPANIONS'... DINNERS ARE IN PREPARATION AND WILL BE DELIVERED SHORTLY AFTER THEY ARE READY...
YOU ARE TO REMAIN ON DUTY UNTIL THE PRINCESS AND HER...COMPANION...RETIRE FOR THE EVENING
AT WHICH TIME YOU WILL RETOURN TO YOUR SISTER'S HOME FOR THE NIGHT... SHE WILL BE EXPECTING YOU
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

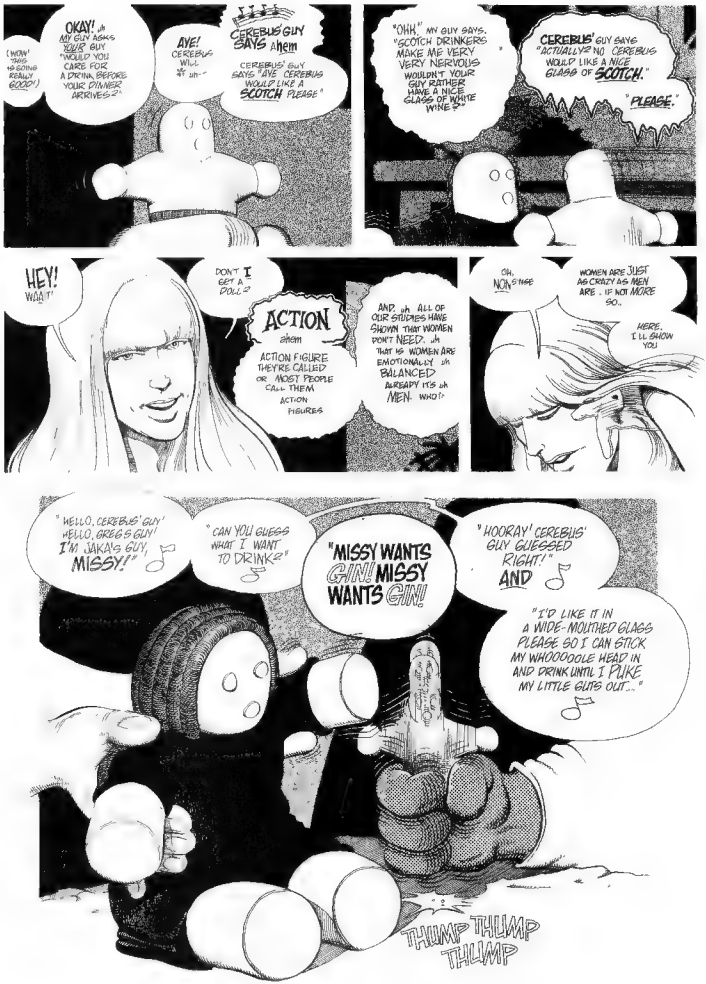
DO YOU MEAN THAT I SHOULD DISPENSE WITH THE HONORIFIC ENTIRELY? OR I SHOULD AVOID PUTTING IT AFTER HER NAME?
I MEAN?! WHEN YOU SAY THAT I SHOULDN'T "APPEND" THE TITLE "PRINCESS" TO HER NAME SHOULD I INFER THAT "PRINCESS JAKA" IS OKAY BUT "JAKA PRINCESS" ISN'T?
OR DO YOU?!
I'M NOT IMPLYING THAT YOU USED THE TERM "APPEND" INACCURATELY... FOR ALL I KNOW "APPEND" DOESN'T JUST MEAN "TO ADD TO, AS IN SOMETHING SUBORDINATE OR SUPPLEMENTAL"
IF I WASN'T SCARED TO DEATH, I'M SURE I COULD COME UP WITH A DEFINITION FOR "APPEND" THAT WOULD MEAN WHATEVER YOU... THAT IS...
DISPENSE WITH THE HONORIFIC ENTIRELY
YES MA'AM
THANK YOU MA'AM.
WHOAH! THE PRINCESS OF PALNU!
AND I'VE GOT A FRONT ROW SEAT
I'LL BE STOPPING BY YOUR MOTHER'S PLACE ON MY WAY, MR. TUSSH!... TO SEE WHAT SORT OF A JOB YOU DID ON THAT LOOSE SHUTTER
Ahhhhh
GREG... LISTEN... I GOTTA SPLIT... I'LL SEE YOU
AND THE CRACKED CHIMNEY.
SOON! REAL SOON
CREEEE KLAK


AND OF COURSE I HAD NO IDEA THAT RICK WAS TELLING THAT HORRID OSCAR PERSON ALL OF IT BEHIND MY BACK
AND EVERYONE FEELS SORRY FOR ME!! "POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL ALL ALONE AMIDST ALL THAT WEALTH"
I REMEMBER TRYING TO TELL SOMEONE ONCE "I WASN'T A POOR, LONELY RICH GIRL... RICK WAS JUST SO JEALOUS ALL THE TIME THAT I COULDN'T SAY ONE WORD ABOUT ANY OF MY FORMER BOYFRIENDS"
SO WHEN RICK TOLD THAT HORRID OSCAR PERSON ALL ABOUT MY "PAST" I SOUNDED LIKE SOME SORT OF WOE-BEGONE, TERRIFIED WAIF WHO JUST SPENT THE WHOLE DAY SKULKING AROUND HER APARTMENTS...
AND THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME! I MEAN, I COULD TELL
THEY WANTED TO BELIEVE THAT I WAS THIS LONELY, MOUSEY LITTLE THING SCARED OF HER OWN SHADOW...
IS THIS IT?
"ACTION FIGURES PUB"
AYE

KLAK
CREEEEEK

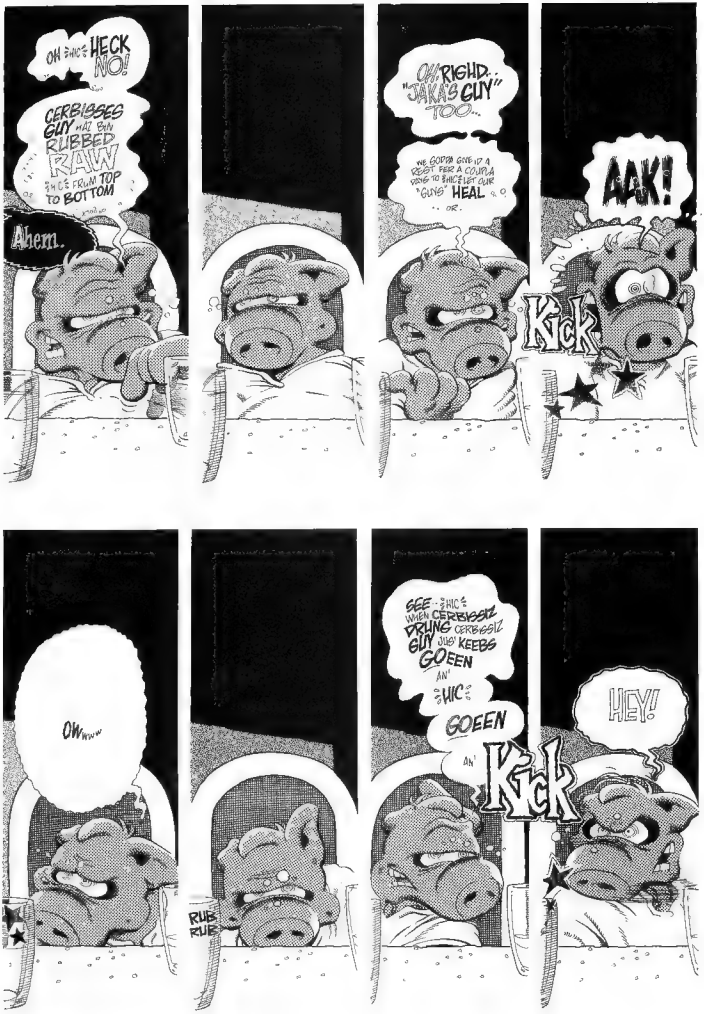
OH, ISN'T THIS LOVELY
WITH THE POLISHED BRASS
AND THE CARVED MOULDINGS
OH!
OH AYE
VERY VERY NICE

WHERE WAS I?
OH RIGHT THAT HORRID OSCAR PERSON'S READ
I MEAN I WAS DUMBFOUNDED WHEN I FINALLY READ IT. NOT A WORD ABOUT THE BALLS OR THE MASQUERADES - FROM THE AGE OF TWELVE I USED TO GO THROUGH A MINIMUM OF FIVE DANCE CARDS AT EACH AFFAIR
THE GESTRIAN AMBASSADOR AND HIS SON USED TO COME IN TWO OR THREE DAYS AHEAD OF TIME JUST TO.
OH I'M SORRY
HELLO!
YOU MUST BE GREG
YES I AM JAKA. MY GUY IS VERY HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU AND YOUR COMPANION - TO THE ACTION FIGURES PUB
A TOTALLY NEW, TOTALLY MODERN PUB EXPERIENCE WHERE BY SPEAKING THROUGH AN ACTION FIGURE CUSTOMERS ARE ABLE TO GAIN NEW AND MODERN INSIGHTS INTO THEIR EMOTIONAL WELL BEING AND THEREBY ASSIST THEM TO MODIFY UNAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS
AND JAKA ?
YES, GREG?
I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF BRINGING YOUR COMPANION HIS OWN ACTION FIGURE
WHHH
OH GO AHEAD
THIS LOOKS LIKE FUN
O-KAY
WHEN I TALK I SAY 'MY GUY IS VERY GLAD THAT YOUR GUY IS HERE!'
OU!
AND CEREBUS' GUY SAYS given 'HEM'
"CEREBUS' GUY IS VERY GLAD TO BE--"
NO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE A DIFFERENT VOICE JUST YOU KNOW YOUR REGULAR VOICE
OH AYE
"CEREBUS' GUY IS VERY GLAD TO BE HERE, TOO!"
HEY! MY GUY SAYS "IT MAKES ME FEEL ALL HAPPY THAT YOUR GUY IS GLAD TO BE HERE!"


(WOW! THIS IS GOING REALLY GOOD!)
OKAY! uh MY GUY ASKS YOUR GUY "WOULD YOU CARE FOR A DRINK BEFORE YOUR DINNER ARRIVES?"
AYE! CEREBUS WILL sir uh-
CEREBUS GUY SAYS Ahem
CEREBUS' GUY SAYS "AYE CEREBUS WOULD LIKE A SCOTCH PLEASE"
"OHH," MY GUY SAYS. "SCOTCH DRINKERS MAKE ME VERY VERY NERVOUS WOULDN'T YOUR GUY RATHER HAVE A NICE GLASS OF WHITE WINE?"
CEREBUS' GUY SAYS "ACTUALLY? NO. CEREBUS WOULD LIKE A NICE GLASS OF SCOTCH."
"PLEASE."
HEY! WHAT!
DON'T I GET A DOLL?
ACTION Ahem
ACTION FIGURE THEY'RE CALLED OR MOST PEOPLE CALL THEM ACTION FIGURES
AND, uh ALL OF OUR STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT WOMEN DON'T NEED: uh THAT IS WOMEN ARE EMOTIONALLY uh BALANCED AUSPAPY IT'S uh MEN. WHO?
OH. NON-SENSE
WOMEN ARE JUST AS CRAZY AS MEN ARE . IF NOT MORE SO..
HERE. I'LL SHOW YOU
"HELLO, CEREBUS' GUY! HELLO, GREGG'S GUY! I'M JAKA'S GUY, MISSY!"
"CAN YOU GUESS WHAT I WANT TO DRINK?"
"MISSY WANTS GIN! MISSY WANTS GIN!
"HOORAY! CEREBUS' GUY GUESSED RIGHT!" AND
"I'D LIKE IT IN A WIDE-MOUTHED GLASS PLEASE SO I CAN STICK MY WHOOOOOLE HEAD IN AND DRINK UNTIL I PUKE MY LITTLE GUTS OUT..."
THUMP THUMP THUMP

HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHA
HA HA HA HA
ONE LARGE G N IN A WIDE MOUTHED GLASS FOR JAKA'S GUY..
M SSH SAYS "THANK YOU GREG'S GUY"
MY GUY SAYS "YOU'RE WELCOME, JAKA'S G UY
"YOU'RE WELCOME MISSY"
ONE LARGE SCOTCH FOR CEREBUS' GUY..
CEREBUS GUY SAYS "THANK YOU, GREG'S GUY"
MY GUY SAYS "YOUR GUY IS VERY WELCOME, CEREBUS"
A GLASS OF WHITE WINE FOR JAKA
THANK YOU.. GREG
YOU'RE VERY WELCOME, JAKA..
AAAND A SMALL SCOTCH FOR CEREBUS
THANK YOU GREG
YOU'RE VERY WELCOME CEREBUS

CERBIGGIS CUTE LIL GUY CAN'D REMEMBER 'IN' HIS TIME HE WUZ SOOOOO HAPPEE
WISEN SAYS 'TWO NIGHTS AGO WHEN CERBEBUS' GUY HAD FOUR SCOTCHES.'
UH, GREEG'S GUY HAS A QUESTION FOR MISSY
MISSY SAYS 'WHAT IS IT, GREEG GUY?'
HAPPEE
HAPPEE LIL TWIT'S GUY
"DOSE IT, BROTHER. MISSY, WHEN CERBEBUS GLY DRINKS FOUR SCOTCHES-"
MISSY SAYS "OH, NO NOT AT ALL."
"AS LONG AS CERBEBUS GUY KNOWS HE ISN'T GETTING ANY' TONIGHT"
CERBIGGIS IZZIH GEDDING ENNY
CERBIGGIS IZZIH GEDDING ENNY TOOCHNIGHT?
GO UHM.. GREEGS GUY WANTS TO KNOW, "IS THAT MISSY'S WAY OF... UH... PUNISHING CERBEBUS' GUY?"
PUNISH...? OH, NONONO MISSY SAYS... HOW CAN WISEN PUT THIS DELICATELY?
MISSY SAYS "I DON'T LIKE HAVING TO WALK AROUND BOW LEGGED THE NEXT DAY."
GULP!
"OH" SAYS GREEGS GUY
GOODNESS!
I'M SORRY
DID MY GUY EMBARRASS YOUR GUY?
NO!
I MEAN- UH AC...ALLY THESE ARE JUST THE SIDEST OF ISSUES MY GUY
F...KIDS
VERY.
COUGH
CEREBUS?
HAWH?
DOES YOUR GUY FEEL ANY UH RESENTMENT THAT YOUR GUY ISN'T UH GETTING ANY' TONIGHT?


OH HIC HECK NO!
CERBISSES GUY HAZ BIN RUBBED RAW FR HIS FRUM TOP TO BOTTOM
Ahem.
OH RIGHD. "JAKA'S GUY" TOO...
WE GOTTA GIVE IT A REST FER A COUPLA DING TO SHICE UP DUNE "GUNS" HEAL
.. OR.
AAK!
Kick
OWWW
RUB RUB
SEE HIC WHEN CERBISSIZ DRUNG CERBISSIZ GUY JUS' KEEBS GOEEN AN' HIC
GOEEN AN' Kick
HEY!

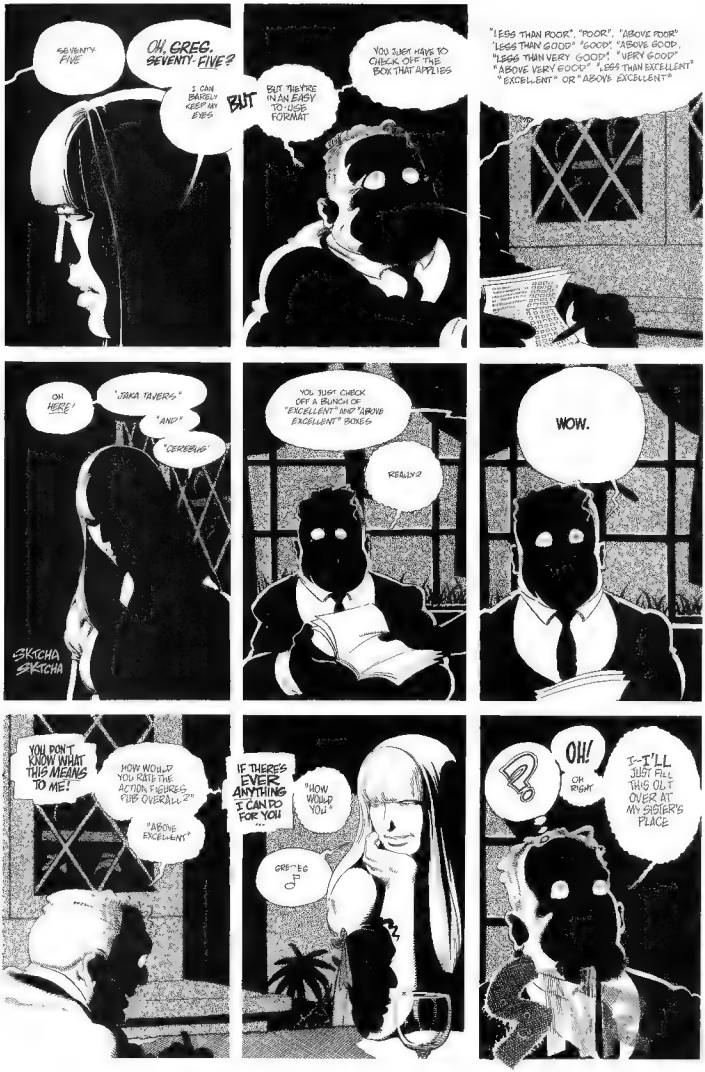
HA HA HAH HA HOO HOO HA HA
HAHAHA HAHAHA HA!
OH, SORRY
DID CERBUS'S GUY EMBARRASS JAKA'S GUY?
CERBUS'S GUY HAS EMBARRASSED JAKA'S GUY TO WITHIN AN INCH OF JAKA'S GUY'S LIFE
SO JAKA'S GUY SAYS:
HEE HEE HAHA HAHA
RUB RUB RUB
"SHUT"
"UP."
"DEAR."
RUB RUB
OGAY! HIC HAHA HAHA
OGAY OKAY!
HEH.
CERBUS'S MOM'S HIC SAY A WEIRD.
FER TH' REGGA TH' EE VIN NG.

ACTUALLY, ALL I TOLD HIRO...
REE..O2
RENO
RENO. RIGHT - WAS THAT WE WANTED A PLACE NEXT TO A CLOTHING HUT
HAHA I'M AFRAID WE AREN'T MAKING THE PROGRESS THAT WE SHOULD TOWARDS THE GODS' FENCE
NO?
OH YOU SHOULD'VE HEARD HIM THIS MORNING.. ' WE SPEND HALF THE MORNING LOOKING FOR A CLOTHING HUT AND THE OTHER HALF OF THE MORNING LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT OUTFIT"
HE'S RIGHT, OF COURSE
SIGH
HE IS ALWAYS RIGHT
SNRR
GIGGLE LOUD, TOO
HAH HAHA
SO I SAID "ZIGGY, WE'LL STAY SOMEWHERE RIGHT NEXT TO A CLOTHING HUT TONIGHT."
" I'LL GET UP AT DAWN AND I SWEAR I WILL FIND THE RIGHT OUTFIT RIGHT AWAY..."
HE'S GOT THIS "THING" ABOUT MAKING FIFTEEN MILES A DAY.
BUT.. BUT.. "YOU'RE THE "PRINCESS OF PALAU"
ALL YOU'D HAVE TO DO IS ASK THE MOTHERS AND THEY'D GET YOU A COACH AND DRIVER!

I SUGGESTED THAT
HE SAID "CARRIAGES ARE FOR OLD MEN AND OLD LADIES. AS SOON AS YOU BET FOOT IN A CARRIAGE, YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE A HUNDRED YEARS OLD."
SIGH
RIGHT AGAIN
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
HE'S ALWAYS DOING THAT. SAYING TO HIMSELF THAT I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT BUT NEVER PUT INTO WORDS.
ANYWAY THAT'S HOW WE ENDED UP AT THE ACTION FIGURES PUB
HE IS THE LUCKIEST GUY IN THE WHOLE WORLD.
HAHA
YOU'RE VERY SWEET TO SAY THAT
OF COURSE, THIS IS THE "BEGINNING" PART
THE "BEGINNING" PART IS EASY
SNRK
WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE HOW "LUCKY" EITHER OF US FEELS AFTER WE'VE HAD A CHANCE TO REALLY GET ON EACH OTHER'S NERVES.

WELL GREG IF I AM GOING TO GET UP AT DAWN TOMORROW
CERBERUS AND I REALLY SHOULD BE "OFF TO BED"
SHIT!
I MEAN "SHOOT!"
CAN YOU ANSWER A QUESTION BEFORE YOU LEAVE?
I MEAN
BEFORE I LEAVE?
OH GREG
I'M REALLY TIRED

PLEEEEASE I ONLY HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THE SUMMER TO PROVE TO THE BROTHERS THAT ACTION FIGURES FOR GIRLS CAN BE SUCCESSFUL
I'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO BABY SITTING MY SISTER'S KIDS FULL TIME
BUT
PLEEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PRETTY PLEASE WITH SUGAR ON TOP
I DON'T GET A REMEMA.
HOW MANY QUESTIONS ARE THERE?

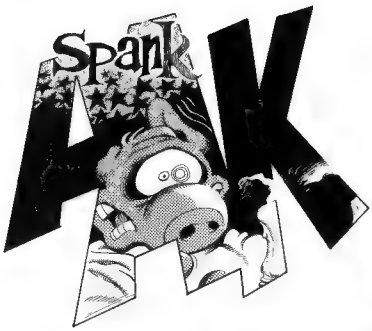

SEVENTY-FIVE
OH, GREG. SEVENTY-FIVE?
I CAN BARELY KEEP MY EYES
BUT
BUT THEY'RE IN AN EASY-TO-USE FORMAT
YOU JUST HAVE TO CHECK OFF THE BOX THAT APPLIES
"LESS THAN POOR", "POOR", "ABOVE POOR" "LESS THAN GOOD" "GOOD", "ABOVE GOOD", "LESS THAN VERY GOOD", "VERY GOOD" "ABOVE VERY GOOD" ,"LESS THAN EXCELLENT" "EXCELLENT" OR "ABOVE EXCELLENT"
OH HERE!
"JAKA TAVERS"
"AND"
"CERBERUS"
SKTCHA SKTCHA
YOU JUST CHECK OFF A BUNCH OF "EXCELLENT" AND "ABOVE EXCELLENT" BOXES
REALLY?
WOW.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME!
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ACTION FIGURES OVERALL?"
"ABOVE EXCELLENT"
IF THERE'S EVER ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU ...
"HOW 'BOUT YOU"
GRETCH
?
OH!
OH RIGHT
I--I'LL JUST FILL THIS OUT OVER AT MY SISTER'S PLACE

ANYWAY * THANKS A MILLION.
YOU'RE WELCOME :)
ERT...
I REALLY MEAN IT-- I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!
HAHAHA YOU'RE WELCOME GREG
GOOD NIGHT.
KLAK CREEEE KLAK
ONLY HE'S GONE YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE ASLEEP ANY MORE
FINALLY
UH- YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THIS'S NERS GOING TO GET ON EACH OTHER'S NERVES...
SO YOU?
HEY
I ALREADY TOLD YOU- ANYTHING YOU HEAR ME SAY WHEN YOU'RE PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT FOR YOURSELF IF I MEAN IT OR NOT.
OH
HEH HEH
AYE

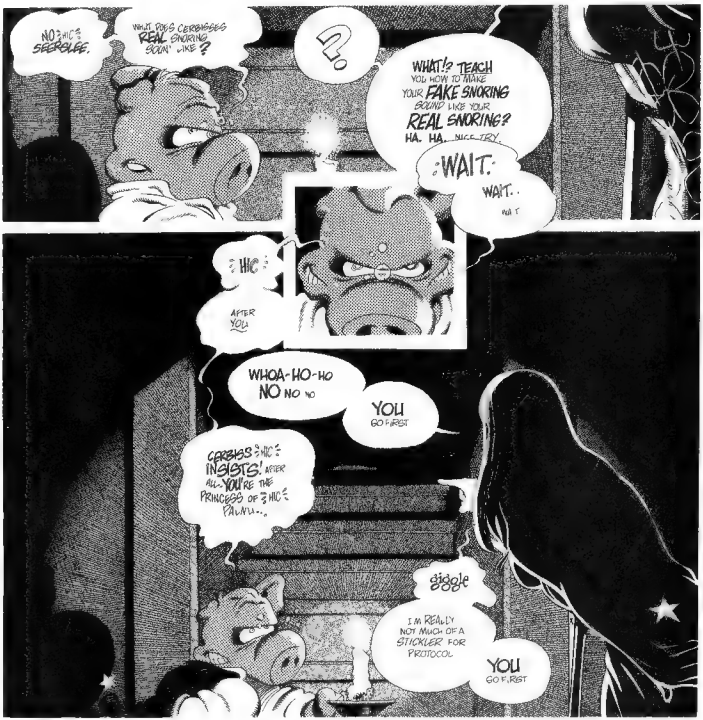
COME ON
TIME FOR BED
GREG SAID HE LEFT A CANDLE AND SOME MATCHES ON THE BOTTOM STEP.
CERBISS LIKED THE PART ABOUT CERBISS BEING RIGHT SHE'S ALWAYS TIME
OH. THAT PART I MADE UP COMPLETELY

Spank

SO WHAT DOES CERBISSES REAL SHE'S SNORING SOUND LIKE?
CHK


Spank
AK

HAHA HEY!
IT SOUNDS A LOT DIFFERENT FROM YOUR FAKE SNORING
HEY! NO KICKING


NO? HIC? SEERSLEE.
WHAT DOES CERBISSES REAL SNORING SOUND LIKE?
?
WHAT!? TEACH YOU HOW TO MAKE YOUR FAKE SNORING SOUND LIKE YOUR REAL SNORING? HA. HA. NICE TRY.
WAIT.
WAIT..
HIC?
AFTER YOU!
WHOA-HO-HO NO NO NO
YOU! GO FIRST
CERBISSES HIC INGESTS! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE PRINCESS OF HIC PAUNU...
giggle
I'M REALLY NOT MUCH OF A STICKLER FOR PROTOCOL
YOU GO FIRST

open letter

DEAR KEVIN

GROTH: You said that Dave Sim forbade you to do any more reprints of Turtles *#8, which has Cerebus in it. Why was that?*

EASTMAN: I never really knew exactly the reason why. We'd done reprints, we paid him for all of the reprints. At that time we were selling very well and he was getting some nice checks, and he just said, "I think people have seen enough of that issue, and enough of that story, and I really don't want to see it out anymore." And that was it, period. So whatever reasons he had, he had 'em. And it was just, "O.K., that's banned." And you know, when a creator or Dave Sim or whoever is involved in it has a say and they say "no," it's "no"

GROTH: No principled opposition to the Turtles *or to your work-for-hire policies with regard to the* Turtles*, though?*

EASTMAN: No, I don't think he said "no" because of something else we had done or were doing or anything like that. I guess I don't want to believe that that was why he did it. I think it was just one of those things. He's an interesting character. (laughter) An interesting personality, and he just, for whatever reason, he just decided, "No, that was enough." And that was it.

It'd be a good question to ask him, though. I'd like to know. It was one of my favorite issues. (laughter)

(Excerpted from the Kevin Eastman interview in Comics Journal *number 202. Reprinted without permission.)*

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I haven't had a chance to read your whole interview yet, Kevin. Gerhard absconded with it when he went up north to work on his sailboat this weekend. All I had a chance to do was my preliminary scan for *Comics Journal* "Dave Sim slams." Sort of a hobby with me. Like looking for the rabbit head on the cover of *Playboy*

Anyway, I did read the parts about *Turtles* number 8 — the Turtles/Cerebus crossover. Boy, did that bring back memories. The best-selling *Turtles* issue out of the run you and Pete did. I had forgotten that part, and it made me smile when I read it. Seems like a hundred years ago and just yesterday at the same time. We met at the long-defunct Moondance Comics. Hadley Mall, if I'm not mistaken. And then really had a chance to have a nice long talk in Wiggins Tavern in the Hotel Northampton. I might be mixing up two different trips here, but I don't think so. You had the whole crossover outlined with little sketches and character designs and just handed it to me in an envelope. I surprised you by opening it up then and there and reading it. I snickered and you eagerly asked me what part I found funny and I told you it was the way you had misspelled a word. I actually used that moment in *Guys* when Cerebus asked Bear what he was laughing at in the *Bazaar Heroes* read. Cerebus the barbarian was so far in the past for me by then that it was quite a kick to see him through another cartoonist's eyes who still saw some validity in the incarnation. And not just that, but to bring a level of enthusiasm to the old "horned helmet" look — as you did — that was beyond me by then. I looked the proposal over a little more carefully in my room that night, and what really "sold" me on the idea was the sketch you did of one of the Turtles (standing next to Cerebus — who was just *fuming* in a Turtles get-up), who was looking out at the reader and saying, "Don't he look great? Whew! Tell him how great he looks." I didn't use the actual gag, but I sure used the sensibility behind the gag when I did my Cerebus-as-Spawn pinup for Todd seven or eight years later. Cerebus in a Turtle outfit. Still makes me laugh when I think of it. I think I told you a while back that I always look forward to signing the First Comics *Turtles* collection (volume three) at conventions and signings because there's room on the title page to do a Cerebus head with the Turtles mask on and how I letter under it: "Matisse, the Unknown Turtle." Always gets a good laugh.

Anyway, since you've expressed an interest in what really happened with the Cerebus/Turtles crossover ban — or, more precisely, in *my* recollection of what happened: expressing your interest publicly in your *Comics Journal* interview, I thought I'd answer your question publicly. Kind of appropriate, I guess, since we both qualify as public figures in the comic-book world.

(Parenthetically, let me add that I thought you held your own against Gary's Joe-McCarthy-style-"Dave-Sim" questions he always throws at my friends: "Have you now or have you ever had occasion to say something nice about Dave Sim, and are you willing to recant and say something bad about him at this time?" Much appreciated.)

The problem started with First Comics, since I really, really did not like the way those guys did business. Particularly the part about "holding the trademark in trust" for their creators. I think that's really how they put it, too. Of course that turned out to be so much malarkey, as Howard Chaykin and Mike Grell and those guys found out. Straight work-made-for-hire glossed over with pretty lies. So, when you and Pete signed with them to do colour reprints of the *Turtles* issues, I did not (to say the least) think it was a very good idea. You might remember that I specifically asked — mm, no — deMANDED that First Comics send me a letter for my files stating that they laid no claim to the character or likeness of Cerebus in the reprinting of the crossover. My lawyer was impressed that I got it, as I recall, since I gave them no reciprocal letter saying that I wasn't going to sue them for unauthorized use of my character. It was, I'm ashamed to say, very satisfying to know that I had a knife at their jugular

of which they seemed unaware. It was uncomfortable having Cerebus published by a work-made-for-hire company, but, hey! You did the lion's share of the work on the book. "Lion's share" is putting it mildly — you did everything except pencilling and inking the Cerebus figures. And even those you roughed in. Likewise with the dialogue which I "translated" into what Cerebus would actually say and lettered in my own style. It was *your* story. If *you* wanted to license it to First, that was *yours* (and Pete's) business.

Of course, then came the problem of royalties. I didn't want any First Comics money, and — as you implied in your interview — it was adding up to a chunk of change, coupled with the royalties on the hardcover reprint that you and Pete did through Mirage. I had no problem with getting paid for my share of the hardcovers (that was just you and Pete), but I really wanted nothing to do with whatever was owed on the First Comics reprints. I remember we did have a conversation about it (in person or over the phone, I don't recall), and I was still trying to figure out some sort of way to resolve it. A case-by-case basis? I'll take royalties from this, but not that? I'll accept a veto over future printings through work-made-for-hire companies? As I recall, it was *you* who said, "Maybe we should just let it go out of print." And then you mentioned something that made sense to me. "After all, there are 135,000 of them out there, not including the First Comics reprints. It's not as if it will ever be rare or anything." So, as I recall, I basically accepted the offer that you made. And then you said something along the lines of: "NOW will you take your damn royalties?" Against my better judgement, I agreed, in the interests of cleaning the whole thing up (of course, the fifteen or eighteen grand U.S. was something of a temptation, I confess).

The week I got the cheque, we got hit with a tax audit, and between this disqualification and that of our "spending like drunken rock stars" time (did you know that you can't write off the whole amount if you fly Concorde — only an amount equivalent to the cost of a British Airways first class ticket?) we got slapped with a bill for taxes and penalties of just about fifteen or eighteen grand U.S. Funny how the universe has a way of cleaning up things you thought were already cleaned up.

Anyway, a little while later (the years do run together don't they?), when I got a retroactive work-made-for-hire agreement from one of the Mirage (be nice, Dave) functionaries, I responded by fax, saying as far as I knew Kevin and I agreed to let the story go out of print. If Kevin has changed his mind, he knows where to find me.

If you *had* called, what I would have said was, "Look, Kevin. It's your story, and it has your characters in it. You pencilled and inked and lettered most of it. I'm the dissenting member from the Northampton Summit when it came to the clause 'We have the right to fully own what we fully create.' Remember the Gerhard factor? I'm the guy who believes that we have the right to *fully* own what we *partially* create. On *Turtles* #8 that goes for you just as much as it does for me. My concern was that I didn't want to get paid in what I considered to be 'First Comics' dirty work-made-for-hire money' for something that was done in the full spirit of creators' rights and freedoms as I understood them at the time we did the story and as I understand them now." And, of course, as I understand them now.

It's pretty late in the day, I guess, but I did want to let you know that that was and is my attitude about the crossover. If you want to see it in print somewhere, by all means — reprint it wherever you see fit. Do it through Slave Labor, and I'll be happy to take whatever you think is a fair royalty and donate it to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund in my name. Do it through DC, and you can just donate whatever you think is a fair royalty to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund in your name. Just make sure that I get a letter saying that DC (or whoever) lays no claim to the trademark or copyright on Cerebus.

Actually, if you still have the films knocking around somewhere, I would give serious consideration to doing a new cover for it and publishing it through Aardvark-Vanaheim as a benefit book for the CBLDF. If the price guides are anything to go by, we were both wrong about the story never becoming rare — or hard to find, anyway.

Whew! (as the Turtles used to say)

Thanks for giving me an opportunity to finally get this cleared up.

All my best, always, to you and Julie.

Your friend,
Dave.

aardvark

COMMENT

Dear David Sim,

It seemed like the majority of the letters published in #229 had to do with *Cerebus* ending, even though there are 70 issues left. I am happy that at least that many issues remain, because I just began reading *Cerebus* perhaps five or six issues ago. My friends who read comics always told me about the quality and length of the story, but I never picked up a copy for some reason. Even though there are *Cerebus* compilation books available, nothing quite compares to the suspense of waiting for the next issue.

Anyway, over the past couple of years I've been supposedly getting smarter and more cultured at college, but I've been growing too intellectual, I sometimes think.

Many of the mainstream titles that I once liked a lot now seem rather silly. In *Cerebus,* though, I'm greatly impressed with many of the details as well as with the story and characters. Your inking style and the varied techniques that create midrange values work well against the planes of black. The placement, size, and style of the lettering and word balloons makes the story great to read (along with the other wonderful elements, of course).

Perhaps it's for the best that I didn't pick up *Cerebus* before because I don't think I would have appreciated it as much. Especially not before I watched my neighbors down the hall getting drunk every other night.

I'm looking forward to the next 70 issues!

Sincerely,
Tamara Visco
Pomona College
Claremont, CA

Every other *night? I want all of you college students to go out and rent* Animal House *this very minute. Every* other *night. No wonder higher education is going to hell in a handcart.*

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Mr. Sim:

A brief miscellany.

Congratulations on being smart enough to keep everything in print. I bought extra copies of *Number Zero* and the *World Tour* issues of *Cerebus,* forced them on a friend of mine who I knew would love them, and consequently hooked him good. He managed to pick up everything through *Jaka's Story* at 75 percent off when Jim Hanley's Universe closed their Staten Island location (and had a progressive discount sale during their last week). He's ordering *Melmoth* and up direct from you. Not a bad deal all the way around, I must say.

Rick's Story #1, "Something fell": Chills went racing up and down my spine. I've never experienced such a palpable sense of fear before, while reading a comic book. I wanted to look over my shoulder to make sure that Cirin wasn't actually standing behind me; that one line summoned her presence so acutely, it was astonishing.

I'm enclosing an ad that might be of interest to you. The play's got ten rave reviews across the board, and the gay press has been particularly kind. This is surprising, given the generally catty nature of gay press reviews of any gay-themed or even gay-related entertainment. In this case, it's especially surprising; my people, we do love our Oscar.

I remember, from a while back, reading something of yours about the differing perceptions that people have of the various novels in *Cerebus,* and *Jaka's Story,* you said, was seen as being at one end of the spectrum, a glorious "Queen Mary"-esque ship, soaring majestically over the literary seas. At the other end of that scale, however, was *Melmoth,* a small dinghy, tied — rotting — to the dock.

I've never understood that. *Melmoth* is genius: perceptive, insightful, heart-wrenching...I won't even try to explain it. *Melmoth* is wonderful. If you ever make it down here to see the play, look me up. I'll buy you one of our wussy American beers.

Thanks for all the good reads.

Sincerely,
Mark Schryver
19-25 Ditmars Blvd., 3rd Floor
Astoria, NY 11105-3605

P.S. Have you ever seen or read Tom Stoppard's play *Travesties*? I ask because of its connection to Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest.* If you don't know it, run right out and buy a copy; it's wonderful too.

As you might've guessed from Mark's reference to Rick's Story *#1, I've decided to work ahead on this "back of the book" part here, so I can maintain my momentum on the story itself. So, I decided to run* every *letter that "made the cut" and is in the on-deck circle ready to go. Some of them are a little dated. Hope you guys don't mind.*

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Dave,

I hope the postcard wasn't too confusing. I had been in the Tate Gallery in London for the first time and was stunned by the room full of Blake (especially the woodcuts). When I saw the portrait of his death mask by Francis Bacon, it closed a circuit between Blake, Bacon, and (Pope) Cerebus. I had intended to post it from up here, but I wandered past the Houses of Parliament, only to see the Thatch anointing Vague the Younger, so I thought I'd post it from the Commons post office. You were right, incidentally, about the gap between original and reproduction. I've never seen Blake's work up close and found it had a distinctly unsettling appeal, especially the biblical illustrations. Of course, that didn't stop me buying a fridge magnet with his portrait of Newton on it. Typical of Blake and no one else, it shows the descent of man and the corruption of his nature culminating in Newton's dividers (a well-known Masonic symbol) measuring angles on the ground. I can't resist having this image reproduced on plastic with a magnetic back sticking to my desk, above my monitor.

You're due a big letter about #219, so these are my more or less sequential reflections, after a healthy 15 minutes' perspective. I'm also trying to ignore the amazingly fin-de-empire news coverage of Britain pulling out of Hong Kong today, so thanks for the opportunity to turn my mind to higher things.

I'm in two minds about the extracts you're running in the front of the book. On one hand, it's a nice insight into your value system as a writer. Very revealing. A short while back, I put together a collection of lines that meant something to me, for framing as a collage (yes, I know, I have too much time on my hands). The choices were revealing to me: Chandler alongside Zelazny, Runyon, a tip of the hat to Gaiman's toast in *Season of Mists,* even a line from *The Dark Knight,* some William Gibson, a bit of Mailer, some lines from James Ellroy. But, when I'd got

it together, it looked dead on the page. Too much like a fishmonger's slab. And so it is with your extracts: stripped of context, they're lessened — at best only a teaser to tickle my interest, but no power.

Probably that'll be a moot point by next issue, but I thought I'd let you know.

So, page 1…(this could be a long letter…)

I really was caught off guard by the mini-"Cerebus Dreams." I think this is your fault/intention (just as there are no "bugs" in Microsoft's programs, only "undocumented features," so there are no "faults" in creative works, only "unanticipated interpretations"). By playing with the temporal frame of the story, and introducing layers of reality back in *Minds,* you've prepared me for time-slips and general jerking the character around. Now I'm expecting it. Let's see, how can I clarify…If Cerebus can have a vision of Jaka's intended seduction, if Joanne can wander in from a "What If…?" ("What if Cerebus and Jaka Got Married?" Not one of the all-time best issues; I preferred "What if Elrod Became Swoon?" and "What if Lord Stormsend Voted Goat?" but there you go), then I'm quite prepared for the notion that *Guys* is an imaginary tale and that Cerebus could wake up at the end, with no time having elapsed. So I was surprised when Cerebus was only dreaming, not dreaming. Got that?

He's on to a loser with the "No heart beats trick breasts" tactic, though. He can only ever not have one heart, but the world is full of trick breasts…

And ending on that line…Really did my head in, so you did. Whether the guy in the sweater with the book is Rick (yes, he has Rick's body language, especially the armpit-sniffing department, and I've gone through a not-dissimilar metamorphosis from gangly youth to hulking 30-something) or whether he's the guy you based Rick and maybe even Bear on (my first thought), that line still does my head in. An ex-friend once mailed me the back page of issue, oh, something or other, the one with the ad for the T-shirt. He thought he should say it before I did. So that line still reverberates along my personal centipede time line. It will be interesting if it is Rick, though. Time does have a way of turning today's tragedy into tomorrow's reminiscence. And, in the process, absorbing the power and magic of the experience.

This isn't much of a summing-up of *Guys,* is it? Maybe that's a good sign. I've never been interested in summing-ups of Marx Brother movies, or the better episodes of *Frasier,* or Mark Eitzel albums. I can't take even the Scotch Malt Whisky Society's tasting notes seriously. So let's leave it at: "I enjoyed this book thoroughly, from first to last. You remade a lot of the points you hammered out in *Mothers and Daughters,* only this time with a lighter touch and a wryer smile. You brought a lump to my throat once or twice, but made me giggle on public transportation more than that. And I liked all those cameos. And I forgive you for 'Whiskey.' But not for 'Wheeskey.' A fine piece of work, sir."

And on to the back…The penultimate Moore? Well, it wasn't as bad as being locked in a lift with Norman Mailer and Salman Rushdie. It never got as bad as Truffaut interviewing Hitchcock (it got close, mind you). As a matter of fact, it did remind me of a particularly depraved South Bank Show, if someone had dropped a tab or two on Melvyn Bragg before introducing Eddie Izzard on a bad night. Oh, sorry. Was that a little too British? Points that stuck out were your description of the writer lurking behind your eyes, filing speech for later use. Roger Zelazny quotes someone as defining a writer as someone who, if handed his death sentence, would redraft it, if it were a bad sentence. On the cult of Noddy, my favourite religion is the Cult of the Sub-Genius, who take their icons where they make them. My one belief that the world is ruled by a cabal of Zelazny fans was reinforced by hearing that Alan's daughter is called Amber.

I will be getting hold of Alan's bumper *Fun Grimoire* (thanks for the ISBN number). It's funny that my default image of a Magician is veering from a Greenwich Village sybarite to a North Country bogey man. It's also funny that you, me, Alan, Neil. and just about everyone who is anyone share those Dikto/Kirby allusions. I must get around to working out the precise effect of growing up in a Marvel Universe sometimes, as opposed to Goon World, Doc Smith's multiverse, or any other fantasy womb-world.

Interesting that Steven Hawking kept popping in as the icon of rationalism. The only association I have is the time he told me the "Physics is my science-fiction" and the fact that he kept trying to hustle my chick (oh, and that his son Robert is such a nice guy). All the stuff about free will vs. determinism always struck me as a bit of a blind alley. If we perceive ourselves as being free, we are free. If we see ourselves as prisoners, we are bound by the rules of the prison. This may be why, as a philosopher, I make a good whisky sour, and as a writer, I can only make money in non-fiction…

And speaking of whisky, we'll have to get to the Saracen's Head Inn next time you make Glasgow. A pub so old that Billy Connelly proposed it as the real venue for the Last Supper. Or come to Newcastle, and I'll make you feel really old by showing you the Bigg Market. Or I suppose I can pawn the Eye of Agamotto and come and see you and big Al face off in Northampton.

I think it goes without saying, but thanks for the chance to eavesdrop. Why not put the faxes and a couple of ads out as a pamphlet? Or have it posted on the Net somewhere (I'd get it done for you, but damned if I'm going to retype all that text).

I'll meet you at the next book.

Cheers,
Michael Mooney
26 Stokesley Grove
High Heaton
Newcastle
NE7 7au

"Britain pulling out of Hong Kong today." You see what I mean about some of these letters being a little dated. The next one came in a few days after Lindbergh landed safely in Paris (just kidding).

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Dear Dave,

I've been a ravenous *Cerebus* Fan since discovering the comic around issue 140 or so. I immediately got the back "phone books." I've loved the satire of economics, politics, and religion, not to mention that of other comics. I've thoroughly enjoyed characters such as Julius, Cirin, Oscar, Astoria, and the Roach. One of my computers is named Cerebus. (The other is Elfquest. The printer is named Boobah; seemed appropriate, it's a bit slow.)

However, I'm (shudder) happily married (yes, it happens; I'm not going to try to prove it), and I'm sick unto death of Gender Relations. This is fine, as not all parts of a multi-decade work such as *Cerebus* will appeal to all readers. However, I'm wondering if there is anything in the next 75 issues that will be of interest to me. *Guys* was still interesting because of the amazing supporting cast, but *Rick's Story* is boring me to tears. I still buy *Cerebus* out of habit, but it sits at the bottom of my stack of comics and is read with little of the old excitement.

(Normally at this point I'd apologize for mercilessly criticizing the work of a creative luminary such as yourself, when I've never written a word of fiction in my life. But my sense is you can take the abuse.)

Just give me a sign, Dave. Tell me something is going to *happen* at some point in the future.

Sincerely,
Steven C. Anderson
4135 41st Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406-3421

P.S. I'd also like to see the return of Aardvark Comment — even if it's only a single page.

P.P.S. The art remains incredible, even as the story doth plod.

Bet you liked issue 230.

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Dear Dave,

I'm probably about the hundredth person from Vancouver to send you this article, but in case I'm not, I thought you might like to read it. Personally, I really enjoyed reading *Guys*, partly because I could *really* identify with each of the characters, and partly because it made me laugh, and partly because it made me think. At one time or another, I have watched helplessly as my friends made asses of themselves over a woman. I've done it myself; I've made the jokes and been the butt of jokes. These are also the things that made me laugh. When we have the mirror turned back on ourselves and get to see how ridiculous we've been, laughing is the only sane consequence. I've been fortunate enough to laugh and learn from my own mistakes, as well as learn from others. I've learned not to bullshit myself that things are great when they're not. I've learned to not wait more than 20 minutes for a date to show up and to always have something else to do. Most importantly, I've learned that a "Very Dry Heave" will *always* need a little more grenadine. Thanks, Dave, you're one of my favorite teachers.

Your Pal,
Clint Barnett

The funniest part of the review was in the last paragraph where the reviewer hailed me as a great Canadian writer and urged the Canada Council of the Arts to give me a big, fat grant so I could do whatever I want. As Gerhard pointed out, I'm already doing whatever I want, so I guess the Canada Council can just give the money to someone who spray-paints slabs of concrete different colours.

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Dear Dave and Gerhard,

I just thought I'd drop you a line after reading #226. Most certainly the best issue for a while. I really like what you are doing with the text and particularly with the "animated" word balloons. It's cutting-edge stuff.

I re-read *Guys* — it works better as a novel, and I suspect that *Rick's Story* will be the same. The revelation that Tarim is now known as God brings the whole thing one step nearer to our own reality — is that where it is all heading?

The *Mama's Boy* essay was well written and observed. I was thinking about some of the kids at the school where I work. The ones who talk too much and can't see the pecking order. The ones who constantly don't understand why things don't run smoothly for them. I've explained it to them before —that's always when Mama comes into school and says that I'm not sorting out such-and-such a problem. Perhaps I should run off a few copies of your essay (fully credited of course) and hand them out. I doubt they'd understand. Often the whole *Mama's Boy* family have their heads in the sand or up their arses. They know so much, they must be right!

Anyway, I don't want to keep you away from the drawing board. Thank Gerhard for his beautiful work and thanks for keeping it regular in my comics shop (Magic Labyrinth).

Cheers for now,
Adam Richards
39, Harris Road
Beaumont Leys
Leicester, LE4 0RQ
England

P.S. If you print this, can you include my full address? I just love getting letters and writing back. I'll guarantee a reply if people take the time to put pen to paper.

Thanx.

Well, hey, thanks to Magic Labyrinth for finding space for us on the shelves. And here's your complete address as well. If all of you nice folks out there can spare a few minutes this month, drop Adam a line.